

# Metadata Overview

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# What is Metadata?

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- One definition of metadata is that it is data about data.
- I would explain metadata this way:

Remember the old card catalogues in the library? The cards contained the title of the book, its subject, author, published date, how many pages, etc. Those card catalogues were metadata—not the books themselves, but data that described the properties (or elements in metadata speak) about the books.

# What Can Metadata Do?

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- Metadata can help you manage your website by aiding you in:
  - Identifying content that has not been reviewed in a long time
  - Tracking down content that may be obsolete
  - Finding content that might be related so you can establish logical links
  - Aggregating content from multiple websites
  - Showing ownership/authorship of a document
  - Improving search results on agency web searches

# What Metadata Can Not Do

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- Metadata may not offer much in the way of improving your page's "ranking" on global searches such as Yahoo and Google.
  - Most of the major searches do not currently give much credence to metadata as it was misused early in the web's evolution
  - Descriptions may be one exception to this
  - However, FirstGov and your own internal searches could be configured to use metadata to improve search results

# Metadata on Federal Websites

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- For metadata to be truly useful, it must be used consistently.
- We are recommending agencies use Dublin Core compliant metadata.
  - Dublin Core (named for Dublin, Ohio where it originated) is an international standard for the application of metadata
  - Many countries, and several U.S. agencies currently use Dublin Core compliant (or compatible) metadata.

# Metadata on Federal Websites

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- The Web Content Management Working Group recommends that all Federal websites include at least 6 Dublin Core metadata elements on their pages:
  - Title
  - Description
  - Creator
  - Date Created
  - Date Reviewed
  - Language

# An Example

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- Here's an example of the Metadata from HUD's home page:

<meta name="dc.title" content="HUD home page, Homes and Communities (HUD)">

<meta name="dc.creator" content="HUD, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development">

<meta name="dc.language" scheme="ISO639-2" content="eng">

<meta name="dc.date.created" scheme="ISO8601" content="1995-04-01">

<meta name="dc.date.reviewed" scheme="ISO8601" content="2005-04-07">

<meta name="dc.description" content="HUD's Homes and Communities Page is a clearinghouse of information and services about homes and communities for citizens and for HUD's current and potential business partners.">

# How To Get Started

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- Visit the Web Content Managers Toolkit at <http://www.webcontent.gov> where you will find:
  - Information on Dublin Core
  - Examples and models of how other agencies are using metadata
  - Metadata tools
  - Coming soon... a recommended “controlled vocabulary” of audiences to use with the dc.audience element



# Metadata on Federal Websites

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- Agencies are free to use more than 6 elements, but are encouraged to use Dublin Core compatible elements in their metadata.
- You can find information about Dublin Core at:
  - <http://www.dublincore.org>
  - <http://www.webcontent.gov>